

Mendenhall Mill  
East side of Mill Creek Road, opposite  
intersection with Mendenhall Hill Road  
Hockessin Vicinity (Loveville, Mill Creek Hundred)  
New Castle County  
Delaware

HABS No. DEL-167

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Eastern Office, Design and Construction  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. DEL-167

## MENDENHALL MILL

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Location: East side of Mill Creek Road, opposite intersection with Mendenhall Hill Road, Hockessin Vicinity (Loveville, Mill Creek Hundred), New Castle County, Delaware.

Present Owner: Mrs. Donald P. Ross, DuPont Building, Wilmington, Delaware.

Present Use and Occupant: Vacant.

Statement of Significance: One of the small mills of the famous milling industry of Delaware. The nineteenth-century equipment, including the metal overshot wheel, are still in place.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: James Mendenhall owned grist and saw mills in the area as early as 1804. The present mill structure remained in the Mendenhall family through the nineteenth century, being run by John Mendenhall, great-grandson of James Mendenhall, during the 1880's.
2. Date of erection: "J. M. 1826" appears on datestone in west gable of structure.
3. Builder: James Mendenhall, miller.
4. Original plans, construction: The large rectangular structure of two stories remains in plan probably as originally constructed.
5. Notes on alterations and additions: Corrugated-metal covering on north slope of gable roof added in recent times, as well as corrugated-metal shed near west entry. Small interior office on first floor probably added in late nineteenth century.

- B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: In the tax assessment list of 1804, James Mendenhall was listed as owning both grist and saw mills in Mill Creek Hundred located on Mill Craek. The present structure dating from

1826 contains metal equipment of a later nineteenth century date. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the inventions of Oliver Evans of Delaware revolutionized the milling industry of Delaware and later that of the whole nation. The work performed at this Mendenhall mill, however, was probably solely custom work.

C. Sources of Information:

Evans, Oliver. The Young Mill-Wright and Miller's Guide.  
(Philadelphia: Cary, Lea and Blanchard, 1834 - First  
Edition 1795).

Rea, Samuel M., and Price, Jacob. "Map of New Castle  
County, Delaware." (Philadelphia: Smith and Wistar,  
1849).

Scharf, J. Thomas. History of Delaware 1609-1888, Vol.  
II. (Philadelphia: L. J. Richards and Co., 1888). p. 924.

Prepared by William B. Bassett  
Architectural Historian  
National Park Service  
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With the co-operation of Robert L. Raley, AIA

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: An interesting example of grist-mill construction with thick masonry exterior walls and timber framing.
2. Condition of fabric: Poor condition with floors partially rotted out.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: A three-and-a-half-story structure approximately thirty-five feet wide by forty feet long.
2. Foundations: Stone rubble and mortar.
3. Wall construction: Twenty inch stone rubble and mortar on three sides with timber frame wall covered by clap-boards at east side.

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4. Chimneys: Brick chimney over gable peak above entry services southwest corner fireplace.
5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: All vartical wooden board Dutch doors, approximately forty-three inches wide by six feet and elaven inches high on wrought-iron strap hinges.
  - b. Windows: Double-hung, six-over-six-light wooden sash; heavy wooden lintels and sills.
6. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: Gable roof with corrugated-metal covering on north slope and wooden shingles on south slope.
  - b. Cornice: Wooden box cornice.
  - c. Dormars: None.

C. DascRIPTION of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The basement is a thirty foot by thirty-six foot rectangle with an exterior Dutch door in the center of the southeast side wall. Two eleven-by-eleven-inch wooden posts each at third points carry twelve-by-fourteen wooden beams which support wooden floor joists. A series of six ten-by-ten-inch timber members with wooden bracing enclose the propulsion machinery of the mill in the southeast corner of the basement. A crude central stair ladder leads up a straight flight to first floor.

The first floor consists of a rectangular area interrupted by a small (twelve-by-eighteen feet) mill office with corner fireplace to the south of the main entry in the southwest elevation. A central (twelve-by-twelve-inch) post nine feet to the east supports an eleven-by-fifteen-inch beam which spans the width of tha structure and supports five-by-seven-inch floor joists at twenty-two inches on center. To the north of the central eleven-riser stair ladder and nine feet east of the prior post, a post supports a twelve-by-fifteen-inch beam which supports the five-by-seven-inch floor joists at twenty-two inches on center, and three-by-ten-inch floor joists at twenty-one inches on center. Two four-foot diameter stone mill wheels occupy the southeast corner of the first floor.

The second floor is serviced by the central stair ladder from the first floor and next to this a stair ladder to the attic. Thesa are flanked by ten-by-ten-inch posts

which support twelve-by-fourteen-inch beams which span the 2-length of the structure (east-west) and in turn support three-by-eight-inch floor joists at twenty-one inches on center. Two grain feeders occupy the southeast corner of this floor to feed grain to the two mill stones below.

The attic is an uninterrupted rectangle with a central stair ladder down to the second floor.

2. Flooring: In the basement there is a dirt floor. In the first through attic floors the flooring is of eleven-inch tongue-and-groove pine boards.
3. Wall and ceiling: Walls are whitewashed rubble and mortar except east end, which is of timber construction.
4. Hardware: Wrought-iron strap hinges on Dutch doors.
5. Heating: Small corner fireplace in southwest corner of mill office with four-by-three-foot opening and hole for stove pipe above. At attic level chimney flue corbela over to brick chimney at end of gable ridge.
6. Machinery: Two sixteen-inch metal flume pipes lead from the north (Mill Creek) to a four-foot cubic flume box over a nineteen-foot metal overshot wheel. The wheel has approximately fifty-six buckets fourteen inches wide to turn a six-inch shaft supported by a stone and rubble wall east of the mill structure. The six-inch shaft leads into a ten-foot pinion with a two-foot take-off spur on the end of a long four-inch diameter metal shaft which holds (east to west) a smooth belt wheel (sixty-inch diameter), a side-toothed wheel (seventy-six-inch diameter), a central shaft support box next to which is a miter gear with a twenty-six-inch diameter member on the shaft and a twenty-inch diameter member mounted above to drive the first-floor mill stone above. Another shaft support box is placed before the end shaft spur wheel (seventy-two-inch diameter) which has openings for wooden cogs to drive a smaller spur wheel with wooden cogs (twenty-inch diameter) on a vertical shaft, which turns a second mill stone above on the first floor.
7. Decoration: A half mill stone on the gable end with "J. M." and "1826" below acts as a datestone and there is a half mill stone above the main doorway. Both have a red brick header round-arch surround.

- D. Site: A rural setting within one hundred feet of Mill Creek Road. The main entry is on the southwest with the axis

of the structure from southwest to northeast at right angles  
to the flume on the northeast with the water flow in a  
southeasterly direction.

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There are remnants of rubble and mortar wall constructions  
of undetermined function northeast of overshot wheel.

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